

# Religion and Sports

PHIL 3070

Fall 2017

Thursdays 10:50-1:30, COH 103

Instructor: Jeff Scholes

Office: COB 4057

Office Hours: Tues., 10:45-12:30; Wed., 12:00-1:30

[email me to set up an appointment to guarantee a meeting](#)

Phone: x8113

E-mail: [jscholes@uccs.edu](mailto:jscholes@uccs.edu)



## Course Description:

This course will examine the complex relationship between religion and sports. While many claims that the two have nothing to do with each other, we will discover that the connection between religion and sports dates back thousands of years. We will explore this history along with more contemporary examples of religion and sports colliding.

Throughout the course we will attempt to answer questions such as: "Is sports a religion?" "Is the devotion of fans to their team religious?" "Should religious people endorse sports?" "Does God care who wins the Super Bowl?" and "Is sports a legitimate way to express religion?"

To answer these and other pertinent questions, we will read some of the leading scholars in the field as well as examine case studies that span many world religions and sports from amateur to professional. Students will be expected to engage the course material in a critical way that will ideally generate a fuller understanding of the longstanding and often controversial relationship between religion and sports.

## Required Texts:

1. *Religion and Sports: An Introduction and Case Studies*, Rebecca Alpert (Columbia University Press, 2015)
  2. *Religion and Sports in American Culture*, Jeffrey Scholes and Raphael Sassower (Routledge, 2014)
  3. *Sport and Religion*, ed. Shirl Hoffman (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Pub, 1992)
- Supplemental Reading Packet (provided at no cost on Blackboard)

## Assignments:

### 1. Leading Discussion Assignment

- Each of you will sign up to lead the discussion on the previous week's reading—two students per assignment.
- You will (collectively between the two of you) write:
  - i. A one page, double spaced summary of the reading
  - ii. A one page assessment of the reading (was it persuasive or not and why? Or if no argument is present in the reading, what are some reflections you have from the reading?)
  - iii. At least 3 discussion questions for the class
- Email me the written portion of the assignment at least one hour before class starts, and I will print out copies for the rest of your classmates.
- You will be graded as a unit (you and your partner), so you are responsible for what is turned in to me.

### 2. Midterm Paper

- 5-6 pages, double-spaced
- You will answer the question, *"Is Sport a Religion?"*
- using at least two of the assigned readings
- Papers will be turned in electronically through Blackboard

### 3. Final Thesis Paper

- 10-12 pages, double-spaced
- You will write a thesis paper on a topic(s) that we have covered in class involving religion and sports.
- I will give you further instructions for the paper during the semester, and we will take some of the last class to discuss it as well before you turn it in.

## Attendance:

- Because we meet only 15 times, you NEED to attend each session—the entire session.
- I will pass around an attendance sheet for you to sign at the beginning of class. If you are late and miss the signup sheet, you are late. Be sure to tell me that you are here, and I'll mark a "T" on the attendance noting "tardy." Two tardies constitute a full absence.
- I understand that issues come up that may force you to miss class. Hence you may miss one entire class unexcused with no penalty.
- Missing more than one class with an unexcused absence, however, will result in the lowering of your final grade by a half a letter grade per class missed after one. Or a B becomes a B- for 2 unexcused absences; a C+ for 3 unexcused absences. Only absences accompanied by a medical note or substantiated family emergency are excused. All others are considered unexcused.

## Grade Breakdown

Leading Discussion Assignment	15%
Midterm Paper	30%
Final Thesis Paper	55%

## Grade Scale

94 – 100 = A	74 –76 = C
90 –93 = A –	70 – 73 = C-
87 –89 = B+	
84 –86 = B	60 –69 = D
80 – 83 = B-	
77 –79 = C+	Below 60 = F

Note: I round up to the nearest tenth of a percent on your FINAL GRADE. If you finish with an 89.5, that is rounded up to an A-. But if you finish with an 89.4999999999999999, that is still a B+.

## Schedule:

8/24	Course introduction, syllabus review	No reading	Watch: 1. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ngeMsyG8iw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ngeMsyG8iw</a> 2. <a href="http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/1343254394001/?#sp=s-how-clips">http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/1343254394001/?#sp=s-how-clips</a>
8/31	Introduction to Religion and Sports	1. Alpert, pp. 1-9 2. Price, CP	Lecture
9/7	Early History of Religion and Sports	1. Alpert, pp. 16-19 2. Harvey, CP (24-36, 49-58)	Watch: <i>Ancient Olympics: Let The Games Begin</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSgIfXKqov4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSgIfXKqov4</a>
9/14	Muscular Christianity → Sports Evangelicalism	1. Blazer, CP 2. Hoffman, CP	Watch: <i>History of the YMCA</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQLPnq_DHo8&amp;t=984s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQLPnq_DHo8&amp;t=984s</a>
9/21	Sports is a Religion	1. Remillard, CP 2. Novak, <i>Sports and Religion (S and R)</i>	Leading Discussion Assignment 1 (LDA): Hoffman, "The Problem with Sports Evangelicalism"
9/28	Sports is NOT a Religion	1. Higgs, <i>S and R</i> 2. Chandler, <i>S and R</i>	LDA 2: Novak, "The Natural Religion"

10/5	Cultural approach 1: Intro and Belief Midterm Paper due at beginning of class	1. Scholes and Sassower, Introduction ch. 2. S and S, ch. 1	LDA 3: Chandler, "Sports Are Not a Religion"
10/12	Cultural approach 2: Sacrifice and Pilgrimage	1. S and S, ch. 2 2. S and S, ch. 4	LDA 4: S and S, ch. 1
10/19	Cultural approach 3: Work and Redemption	1. S and S, ch. 6 2. S and S, ch. 7	LDA 5: S and S, ch. 4
10/26	Islam, Sports and Protest	1. Alpert, 128-133 2. [something on Ali from Remmick]	Watch: <i>Muhammad Ali, Made in Miami</i> . <a href="http://fod.infobase.com.libprox.y.uccs.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=44142#">http://fod.infobase.com.libprox.y.uccs.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=44142#</a>
11/2	No class today		
11/9	Race, Religion and Sports	1. Scholes, CP 2. Rhoden, "The River Jordan", CP	LDA 6: Remmick, "Muhammad Ali and the Nation of Islam" Watch: <i>Forty Million Dollar Slaves</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRU5rXsJr1Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRU5rXsJr1Y</a>
11/16	Gender, Religion and Sports	1. Alpert, 159-170 2. Jonas, "Should Women Play Sports?" CP	LDA 7: Rhoden, "The River Jordan"
11/23	Thanksgiving holiday		
11/30	Native American Mascot controversy	1. Alpert, ??? 2. Irwin, (309-314), CP	LDA 8: Jonas, "Should Women Play Sports?" Watch: <i>Four Perspectives: Native American Mascots</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPRHh7HIYT4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPRHh7HIYT4</a>
12/7	Concluding thoughts	No reading	Discuss final paper
12/10 (Sunday)	Final Thesis Paper due in Blackboard—11:59 pm		

UCCS offers free writing support at The Writing Center at Columbine Hall, room 316. Students of all skill levels can benefit from working with peer writing consultants at any stage of the writing process be it brainstorming, drafting, or final editing. The Writing Center is open for 50 minute face-to-face or online appointments from 9am to 8pm Monday through Thursday and 9am to 2pm on Friday and Saturday. Appointments can be made by visiting <http://www.uccs.edu/writingcenter/>. Call 719-255-4336 with questions about our programming and policies.

Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact and register with the Disability Services Office, and provide them with documentation of your disability, so they can determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that disability accommodations cannot be provided until an accommodation letter has been given to me. Please contact Disability Services for more information about receiving accommodations at Main Hall room 105, 719-255-3354 or [dservice@uccs.edu](mailto:dservice@uccs.edu). Ida Dilwood, Director.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be grounds for failing a student from the course, as well as additional academic sanctions as defined in the Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism, the "use of distinctive ideas or words belonging to another person, without adequately acknowledging that person's contribution" ranges from the improper use of such sources as internet materials to improper use of classmates' notes. It is the students' responsibility to become familiar with the various definitions and penalties for plagiarism. The webpage of the Department of History at UCCS includes detailed information on what constitutes and how to avoid plagiarism: <http://web.uccs.edu/history/toolbox/plagiarism.htm>

The Administrative Policy Statement for the University of Colorado System can be accessed on line at <http://www.cusys.edu/~policies/Academic/misconduct.html>.

Military Deployment and Military Service:

In order to assist students who are called to active duty the Campus has compiled a set of guidelines that include information on withdrawing from courses. General information can be accessed at: <http://www.uccs.edu/~deploy>

In part, that information states that "in order to withdraw from the course, students called to active military duty will need to obtain the proper withdrawal form from the Admissions and Records office, their academic dean's office or the Student Success Help Center. Information about withdrawing and refund deadlines can be found in the schedule of courses. Completed forms need to be returned to the Admissions and Records office. If students are receiving veterans benefits or financial aid, each of those offices will need to approve the form. In addition, the form needs to be approved by the Bursar's Office located in Main Hall on the second floor. Students will be provided a copy of the drop form to retain for their records. The date the form is received by Admissions and Records will determine the amount of any refund."

#### Disruptive Students

For information on the Student Code of Conduct or the Disruptive Behavior Policy go to the Office of Judicial Affairs Website: <http://www.uccs.edu/~oja/>

#### Campus Emergency Response Team

UCCS Chief of Police: Jim Spice, phone: 255-3111, e-mail: [jspice@uccs.edu](mailto:jspice@uccs.edu)

Director of University Counseling Center: Benek Altayli, phone: 255-3265, e-mail: [zaltayli@uccs.edu](mailto:zaltayli@uccs.edu) (regarding harm to self or others)

Director of Judicial Affairs: Steve Linhart, phone: 255-4443, e-mail: [slinhart@uccs.edu](mailto:slinhart@uccs.edu)